

# Gossip and Story About the Czar in 1903



NICHOLAS II, CZAR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.



OLGA, FATIMA, MARIE, ANASTASIA—THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

(Copyright, 1903, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

**S**T. PETERSBURG, June 23.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I want to tell you something about the czar of Russia as he looks, acts and rules in this good year 1903. His life is no secret from his people. Anyone may see him almost any day driving about his palaces in the country near here, and now and then in an open carriage riding through St. Petersburg itself. He has discarded many of the guards which were kept during the reign of his father. The cavalry does not now line the streets when the czar goes out driving. Police spies are reduced in number, and the force of Russian detectives scattered over the world has been cut down. Whatever the czar may be he is no coward. He realizes his danger, but prefers to take the risk rather than have the annoyance of the police.

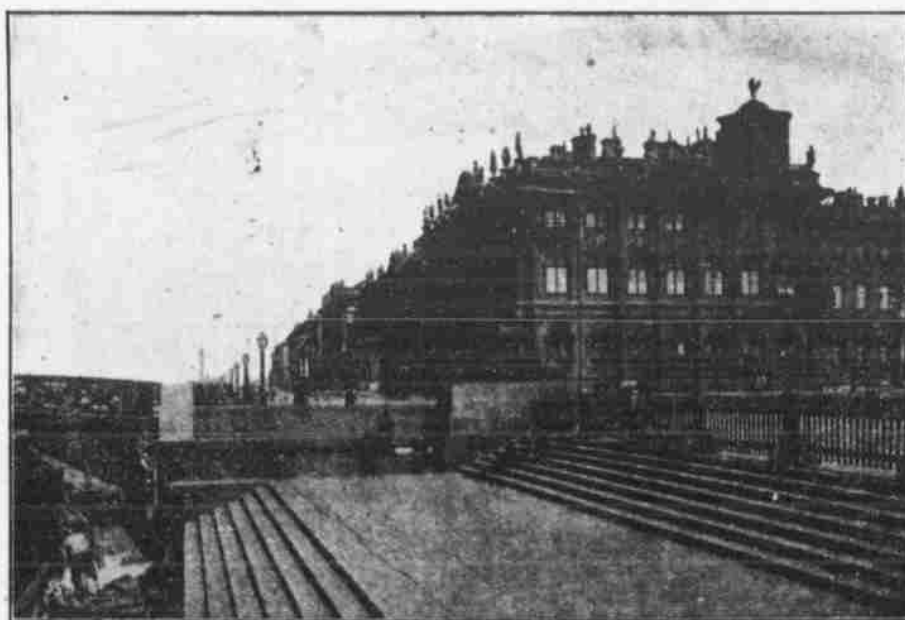
What kind of a man is the czar? In personal appearance he is not impressive. He is now 35 years old, and might be said to be in his prime. He is rather slender than heavy and considerably under size. He is sensitive as to his height, and always stands or sits at the front when his photographs are taken, so that the camera will exaggerate him. His lack of stature comes from his legs, which are too short. From the waist up he is as tall as the average Russian, which means very tall, and when he is on horseback or sitting he looks like other men. In this respect he is like Napoleon Bonaparte and Phil Sheridan, both of whom were long-bodied and short-legged.

The czar is a blonde. He has a fair, rosy skin and bright, blue eyes. His beard is brown and he wears it full. He has white teeth and a pleasant smile. His forehead is high and full and his face an honest one.

Some of the best descriptions I have heard of the czar have been from members of his court here at St. Petersburg, men who know him intimately and who are closely associated with him day after day. The best expression of his character seems to be that he is a Russian gentleman. He is without ostentation. He has none of the airs and bluster of the kaiser. He is a hard worker, but he lacks the spectacular strenuousness of our president. He is noted for his kindness to his servants, his retiring disposition and his love for his people.

The czar avoids crowds and pomp of all kinds and prefers to live in the country. He has three palaces near St. Petersburg, where he spends most of his time with his family. These are Tsarskoe Selo, Gatchina and Peterhof. He has also a country home in the Crimea and other places near here in addition to great palaces at the capital and in Moscow. Wherever he is his work is brought to him. He receives his ministers at his residence and with them goes over matters of state. He keeps a close watch of the empire and in a general way has a large part in its direction.

Nicholas II is a good husband and a loving father. He would be called a good family man anywhere. His wife is with him the greater part of the day and even-



THE WINTER PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG.

ing. She sits in his room while he works, and at his request often stays there when he has important callers.

When her majesty was quite ill some years ago the czar spent the most of his time at her bedside, and as she got better he transacted much of his business there. He had his desk and papers brought into a window recess of her majesty's chamber, and there he worked until she was up and out again.

His majesty usually rises at 8 o'clock, and at 9 takes tea with the empress. A half hour later he goes to his study to read the newspapers, and at 11 is ready to receive his ministers and attend to his correspondence. He has luncheon a little after noon, and at its close usually takes a drive with the empress. Upon his return he goes to work, and sticks at it for the most of the day. He dines at 8 and spends the evening with his family.

The czar has four children, and much to the regret of his subjects they are all girls. According to the law which now prevails as to the Russian succession, the ruler of the empire must be a man, and, if the emperor should die without a son, his eldest brother, Grand Duke Michael, who is now 21, would be his successor.

It is said that the czarina feels much regret because she has no boy and all sorts of stories are given as a cause of this calamity. One of the strangest is that it comes from a curse which a Greek priest uttered against her shortly after she ascended the throne. According to the Russian law, the royal family must worship after the religion of the Greek church. The czar is really the head of the church, and after her marriage the empress began the study of this religion with the intent to adopt it. This priest was her instructor and he seems to have been an egotistical

fellow. At any rate he became very angry one day when her majesty, who had grown tired of his instruction, told him that he might leave, as she knew as much about the Greek religion as he did. He went, but, as he did so, he prophesied, saying that her majesty would have seven daughters, but never a son. This prophecy has gotten about over Russia and as the masses believe what the priests say they fear it may come true. At any rate her majesty has had four girls and never a son.

The four daughters of the czar range in years from 5 to 2. Olga was born in 1895, Tatiana in 1897, Marie in 1899 and Anastasia in 1901.

One hears a great deal of gossip here about the empress of Russia. Some of the people like her very much, and some the contrary. As far as I can judge, she is a charming woman. She is, you know, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, her mother having been Princess Alice, who was the most attractive of Victoria's daughters. She is the daughter of the grand duke of Hesse and as such has German blood in her veins.

The czarina is several inches taller than the czar. She is very beautiful and stately, but rather reserved in her manner. She has a fair complexion, dark grayish-blue eyes and regular features. There is a small mole at the corner of her mouth, but this rather adds to her beauty. She has a low sweet voice and sings beautifully.

The czarina is well educated. She speaks French, English, German and Italian and since her marriage has learned Russian. She has some artistic talent, and, not strange in a German girl, she knows considerable about cooking and household affairs. Before her marriage she was comparatively poor and now as the wife of the richest monarch of the world she pre-

fers to live simply. She does not like the splendor of the court and would rather be in the country with her family than in the great Winter Palace at St. Petersburg.

I am told that the czar is very friendly to America. I was here ten years ago during the great famine when we sent vast sums to Russia. The Russians gave many times as much themselves, and the distribution of the funds was under the charge of the present czar, who was then crown prince. The czar came in contact with the members of our Red Cross society and to them he spoke again and again of the kindness of America to Russia. He remembers that kindness today and frequently expresses his sentiment. Not long ago he said:

"The friendly feeling which exists between Russia and America is genuine, and I trust it will endure forever."

At another time he spoke of what Russia had done for the United States during our civil war, saying that his father had informed him of the cordiality which existed between the countries at that time. The czar now uses American plows, reapers and mowers on his vast estate, and other things being equal he would rather patronize America than any country of Europe.

And this leads me to the vast possessions owned by his majesty. He is by far the richest man of the whole world. Carnegie and Rockefeller not excepted. You know how much a 640-acre farm is? The czar has enough land of his own to make a million such farms. The Russian crown owns 1,000,000 square miles of forests and cultivated lands, an area equal to one-third of the United States without Alaska and our outlying colonies. He has in addition mines in Siberia which produce a vast revenue, and bonds and stocks and gold galore. Indeed no one knows what his revenue is. The crown domains are considered the private property of the imperial family, and there are millions coming from them which never get into the public reports. He has also vast amounts in jewels and other treasures, so that it is impossible to estimate his wealth.

The czar's father was a careful business man. He watched the income and outgo and cut down the expenses of the estate which had been extravagant. When he came to the throne he personally overhauled the accounts of the imperial household, and after a few days' study reduced the ordinary expenses of the court to an amount of \$125,000 a year. He then cut down the imperial stables and looked into the management of his palaces.

In the Winter Palace there had been a magnificent Persian carpet which he had especially admired as a prince. Shortly after his accession he noticed that this had disappeared. He asked about it and was told it had been sent out to be cleaned. He ordered it brought back at once, but the days passed and it did not appear. He then looked into the matter and found that the officers of the household had ordered that the entire palace be refurnished and

(Continued on Page Fifteen.)